

CHAPTER 9. OUTREACH AND AWARENESS

9.1 Rationale for Outreach

This chapter will review how the Task Force has solicited information for formulating the NAAHP, provided information on the status and the content of the NAAHP, and the outreach necessary needed to continue after the plan is adopted and as it is implemented in the future.

9.2 Laying the Groundwork for the NAAHP

In 2001, the Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture established the Aquatic Animal Health Task Force on Aquaculture (Task Force) with the charge of developing the NAAHP. The Task Force recognized that the first outreach activity would be to bring together all interested parties, inform them of the intent to develop a plan, and ask their input on content. Two meetings were held: in Washington, DC, in December 2001, and in Tucson, AZ, in June 2002. The input from the stakeholders shaped an outline for the NAAHP, which was again vetted to all interested parties and reviewed by the JSA itself. Only after approval by the JSA did the Task Force begin soliciting input for the contents of the chapters.

The next step in the process was to hold working group (WG) meetings at which input was solicited from Federal, State, Tribal, academia, and industry partners. A total of 12 WG meetings were held between January 2003 and November 2006. Many of the WGs were focused on species-specific disease issues in regards to surveillance and disease management. Minutes of the meetings were shared with the JSA and posted on the Task Force Web site.

The Task Force's technical team used input from the WGs and other meetings to draft chapters. Once the executive committee of the Task Force approved the chapters, they were then supplied to JSA for comment and posted online for review and further comment. The final step will be the JSA's approval of the draft NAAHP as a complete and finished document which meets the charge given to the Task Force.

9.3 Ongoing Interactions with Partners

The Task Force recognized the need to frequently inform stakeholders of progress on the plan, disseminate information on the input received, and answer questions. One way to do this was participation at stakeholders meetings by Task Force members. The Task Force also convened two national meetings attended by State veterinarians and State directors of wildlife management agencies (one in the western United States in December 2006 and the other in the eastern United States in January 2007) to cultivate teamwork with State partners.

Below is a list of many of the associations that the Task Force visits at least annually:

Domestic:

Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture
National Aquaculture Association
“Aquaculture America” annual meetings
American Fisheries Society, Fish Health Section – regional and national meetings
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Native American Fish and Wildlife Society
American Veterinary Medical Association, both national meetings and the
Aquatic Veterinary Medicine Advisory Committee
U.S. Animal Health Association
U.S. Trout Farmers Association
Catfish Growers of America
Pacific Northwest Fish Health Protection Committee
Rocky Plains Fish Pathologists
Great Lakes Fish Health Committee

International:

World Organization for Animal Health
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

9.4 Outreach Strategies

- **Oral presentations at meetings and conferences.** One or more Task Force members attend over 20 meetings each year.
- **Web page.** The Task Force maintains an NAAHP section on the APHIS Web site (www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/aqua/index.html). One agency was chosen to host these pages in order to ensure consistency and accuracy, and links are maintained on the NOAA Fisheries and the FWS Web sites. The Web site contains draft chapters of the NAAHP, minutes of the working group meetings, and a method to submit comments to the draft NAAHP chapters.
- **Newsletter.** The Task Force publishes two to three newsletters annually to present the latest activities and progress on the plan. The newsletter is also posted on the Web page.
- **Brochure.** The Task Force created an informational brochure (hard copy and Web based) to provide information on the Task Force and the NAAHP. These brochures are distributed at stakeholder meetings.

Other possible outreach vehicles include informational articles in aquaculture and aquatic health publications, newspaper interviews, and video clips (prepared with assistance of professional outreach staff in partner agencies).

9.6 Outreach after Completion of the NAAHP

The NAAHP is a living document that will need to be modified as conditions change and as new information is learned. It is the intent of the Task Force to continue to function as a team representing the respective Federal agencies. Accordingly, the following outreach

activities should continue so that the public can understand what the Task Force is doing and why:

- 1) Attend national meetings of stakeholders
- 2) Maintain an active and current informational Web site on aquatic animal health activities
- 3) Continue to publish an informational newsletter two to three times a year
- 4) Provide contacts in the three Federal agencies to offer information and answer questions

9.7 Federal Outreach Contacts:

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